

Minutes of Accounts & Audit Committee

Meeting Date: Wednesday, 10 April 2019, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor R Bennett (Chairman)

Councillors:

J Alcock	L Graves
I Brown	B Hilton
P Dowson	R Sherras
M Fenton	R Thompson

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Head of Financial Services, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Mark Heap and Sophia Iqbal (Grant Thornton)

Also in attendance: Councillor S Bibby and Barry Dearing (Independent Person).

A minute's silence was held in remembrance of Councillor Ian Sayers who had recently died.

762 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors A Knox and R Newmark.

763 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

764 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest.

765 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

766 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S COMPLAINT PROCEDURE (CODE OF CONDUCT)

The Chief Executive submitted a report providing Members with information to support the proposed review of the Council's complaints procedure (Code of Conduct). The report outlined the background and issues relating to a complaint received in November 2017 regarding an alleged breach of the Council's Code of Conduct. The Council had given a commitment to review the complaint procedure once the outcome of the complaint was known as the current complaint must be dealt with within the existing procedure. It was important that the content of this report was placed on record, information about how the

complaint had been dealt with and the issues that had been identified by Members and officers in order to assist in the review, as this was likely to be undertaken by Members new to the office of Councillor.

It was requested that an amendment be made to one particular paragraph outlining that it was the full Committee of Accounts and Audit that decided to vary the Council's arrangements in reliance in paragraph 12 of the RVBC model arrangements for dealing with Standards allegations under the Localism Act rather than the Sub-Committee as referred to.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

767 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information outlining the internal audit annual report for 2018/2019. This included the various audits that had taken place which were based on the provision of 673 days of internal audit work. It was highlighted that the large variances between planned and actual days on other systems work and probity and regularity was due to the ongoing staffing vacancies within the internal audit section. Assurance levels on the Council's key financial systems were consistently good and in all the audit work undertaken during the year, no significant control weaknesses were identified.

Internal audit had reviewed the effectiveness of the Council's systems of internal control for 2018/2019 having regard to appropriate assurances obtained from other internal sources. The opinion based on this work was that the Council's systems of internal control are generally sound and effective.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

768 AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT AND SECTOR UPDATE

Sophia Iqbal presented a report for Committee's information on the progress in delivering Grant Thornton's responsibilities as external auditors. The interim audit was completed in March 2019 but work was still ongoing with regard to value for money. The findings of this work would be reported by the deadline of July 2019. The audit was progressing well and to date no weaknesses had been found. The paper also included a summary of emerging national issues and developments that may be relevant and a number of challenged questions in respect of those emerging issues which the Committee may wish to consider.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.40pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Jane Pearson (425111).